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SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/SPG AND IO/UNP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/03/2019

TAGS: PREL PGOV SU AU CD

SUBJECT: AU SUMMIT: AF ACTING A/S CARTER MEETS WITH DARFUR
MEDIATOR

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: AF Acting Assistant Secretary Phillip Carter met with UN/AU Joint Darfur Mediator Djibril Bassole on the margins of the AU Summit. Carter thanked Bassole for his efforts thus far. Bassole predicted that if the International Criminal Court issues an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Bashir, as expected, it would not have an immediate impact on negotiations but would be dangerous for peace negotiations. Bassole asked Carter to press the rebel leaders to ignore the ICC verdict and come to the negotiating table. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On January 30, AF Acting A/S Phillip Carter and Sudan Programs Group Office Director Timothy Shortley met with UN/African Union Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur Djibril Bassole and members of his team on the margins of the African Union (AU) Summit in Addis Ababa.

¶3. (C) Carter noted that he had just met with Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister for African Affairs Zhai Jun (see septel) and communicated that the United States would not support a UN Security Council resolution to defer the International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment of Sudanese President Bashir. It is in Bashir's hands to deal with Darfur in a>Q.oQdv`jQtion that, assuming the arrest warrant is issued, JEM may seek to attack Khartoum in an effort to capture Bashir. Bassole said, as a mediator, he needs to be cautious about the ICC indictment.

¶4. (C) Carter said the USG supports Bassole fully and appreciates his low-key, even-handed approach, but expressed concern that Bassole is not seeking to include JEM into broader negotiations between the Government of Sudan and the other rebel movements right away but instead appears to be following two separate tracks. Carter and Shortley noted that the ICC warrant could be issued as early as February 7, before Bassole's scheduled February 9 meeting in Doha. Carter asked Bassole what effect he thought this might have on the negotiations or on the situation in Sudan.

¶5. (C) Bassole said he did not think the sky would fall immediately. He painted a scenario whereby the ICC warrant is issued, the rebels refuse to negotiate on grounds that Bashir is an international criminal, while the Government of Sudan will stall trying to resolve the problem of what to do about Bashir. In this scenario, he said, the negotiations will not move forward, which is dangerous to the peace process. Shortley said that Sudanese Foreign Minister Deng Alor had told him in conversation earlier that day that, in the event of the issuance of the warrant, the Sudanese would

wait to gauge the reaction of the international community.

¶ 6. (C) Carter said that if the GNU continues on its dissembling and dilatory path, the USG will be required to reassess the situation. He noted, however, that peace by compulsion will not work, what is needed is peace by conviction, and asked Bassole how the USG could help. Bassole said the USG should try to impress upon the rebel groups that the GNU is not the same thing as Bashir: the rebel leaders should be encouraged to get on board immediately to support the peace process, regardless of the ICC outcome.

¶ 7. (C) Turning to Chad and Sudan, Carter said that the USG is trying to keep things on a positive note. Rebel unification might in some perverse way help Chad/Sudan relations, and the Government of Chad is stronger than it has ever been before. The USG is trying to keep lines of communication open between the Governments of Chad and Sudan. Bassole said a Chad/Sudan contact group meeting is scheduled for February 15.

¶ 8. (U) Acting A/S Carter reviewed this message before leaving post.

YAMAMOTO